

REMARKS

In the last Office Action, claims 4 and 11-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Herrera (U.S. Patent No. 6,419,535) in view of Takayanagi (U.S. Patent No. 5,873,756) and Yoshiyuki et al. (JP-Hei-8-99693) ("Yoshiyuki"). Claims 5-10 and 14-20 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim and were otherwise indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The disclosure was objected to because of two informalities noted by the Examiner on page 20, line 14 and page 21, line 23, and appropriate correction was required.

The drawings were accepted by the Examiner. Acknowledgement was made of applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. §119, and the Examiner acknowledged receipt of the priority document thereby perfecting the foreign priority claim.

In accordance with this response, claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 15, 16 and 20 have been amended, claims 11-14 have been canceled, and new claims 21-25 have been added to provide a fuller scope of coverage. The specification has been revised in editorial respects to correct informalities, including those noted by the Examiner, and to provide a direct antecedent basis for the claim language.

As recognized by the Examiner, the totality of the prior art does not disclose or suggest an outboard motor having cover structure as recited in claim 1/14 in which an access opening provided in the cover structure is closed by a lid made of elastic material having a first part which covers the access opening formed in the under cover, and a second part integral with the first part and removably connected to the under cover, the first part being elastically bendable relative to the second part so as to open and close the access opening of the under cover. Independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of objected to claim 14, thereby placing claim 1 in allowable form. Claims 3, 4, 8, 15 and 20 have been amended to correct obvious informalities, and claims 11-14 have been canceled. In addition, claims 15, 16 and 20 have been amended to depend on base claim 1, rather than now-canceled claim 14.

As a result of these amendments, claims 1-10 and 15-20 are pending of which allowable claim 1 is the only independent claim and claims 2-10 and 15-20 each depends, either directly or indirectly, on base claim 1.

New claims 21-25 have been added and are likewise presently pending. Independent claim 21 is directed to an outboard motor comprising an engine and a cover structure defining an engine room in which the engine is disposed.

Claim 21 recites that the cover structure has an access opening for allowing access therethrough to the engine, and a lid for closing the access opening, the lid having one part removably connected to the cover structure and another part integral with the one part and elastically bendable relative to the one part between open and closed positions so as to open and close the access opening. Claim 21 includes the allowable subject matter of objected to claim 14 and thus claim 21, like claim 1, is allowable over the prior art. None of the references of record, including Herrera, Takanagi and Yoshiyuki, discloses a lid having an integral structure comprised of two relatively movable parts in which one part is removably connected to the cover structure and the other part is elastically bendable so as to open and close the access opening, as specified in claim 21.

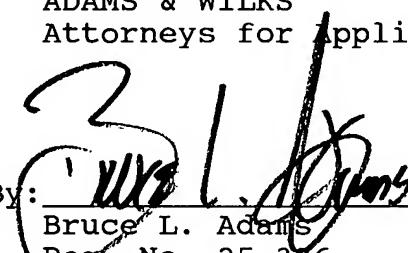
Dependent claims 22-25 each depend, either directly or indirectly, on allowable claim 21 and are, therefore, likewise allowable.



In view of the foregoing amendments and discussions, the application is now believed to be in allowable form. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and passage of the application to issue are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Signature

August 16, 2004

Date